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DEPARTMENT OF STATE
BUREAU OF INTELLIGENCE AND RESEARCH

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TO : The Secretary
THROUGH: S/S
FROM : INR - Roger Hilsman

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

INTELLIGENCE NOTE: CUBA AND CZECHOSLOVAKIA SEEK ADDITIONAL AIRCRAFT AND
SPARE PARTS-62
DEPUTY UNDER
SECRETARY OF STATE

Prague-Havana Route Most Valuable and Secure It is increasingly apparent that by far the most valuable and legally secure air link which Moscow has with Cuba consists of Czech Airlines and Air Cubana flights between Prague and Havana.

These flights, made by Bristol Britannia aircraft, run on a scheduled and non-scheduled basis under the provision of air agreements which Cuba and Czechoslovakia, both members of ICAO, have with the UK, Ireland, and Canada. Western aircraft, such as the Bristol Britannia, are essential on this route since the IL-16 and other types of bloc aircraft do not meet ICAO airworthiness standards and are not permitted to use air facilities on this route.

Efforts to Buy More Aircraft and Parts. Both Czechoslovakia and Cuba appear to be accelerating efforts to purchase additional Britannias from Western countries, as well as to obtain reserves of spare parts to keep the aircraft now in service operating at maximum capacity. Top level Soviet-Czech talks in Moscow this week appeared related to Soviet efforts to facilitate the flow of aid to Castro. If the US is to minimize the air flow of aid to Cuba, Free World denial or at least delay in the licensing of sales of additional Britannias and spare parts to Cuba and Czechoslovakia assumes major importance. Their acquisition by Air Cubana and CSA would strengthen an air channel from the bloc to Cuba which the US has been unable to interdict and which at best can probably only be subject to search and seizure of aircraft passing through Caribbean territory.

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